

SMOKING

AN ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE



Smoking is a modern day catastrophe. It is harmful in all aspects, for it is a waste of money, an unnecessary destruction of health and it can disturb the social balance of the family.

The smoker breathes harm with every cigarette he lights, because both nicotine and tar mix with his blood which ultimately poisons his health and life. Smoking is the quickest way to contract various diseases, some of which include cardiac disease, respiratory problems, and lung cancer.



Historical Notes:

Tobacco derived from Tubago, which is an island in the Gulf of Mexico where this plant was found. It was carried to Spain then to Europe. It was introduced to the Muslim world intentionally by tobacco companies, who encouraged its spread together with all types of intoxicants. Nowadays smoking is decreasing in the industrial countries while it is highly increasing in the poor developing countries.

Modern Statistics:

It is reported by the World Health Organisation that:

At least a million people die annually 'prematurely' all over the world.

50% of the adults in the developing countries smoke tobacco.

Smoking and chewing tobacco lead to 90% of lung cancer cases, 75% of atherosclerosis and 25% of heart diseases.

In America approximately 84% of laryngeal cancer patients were smokers. Mouth cancers were 13 times more common in smokers.

Researchers proved that smokers might have 65 times the chance of contracting lung cancer than non-smokers.

Cancer of the esophagus was 11.5 times more common in smokers than others.

The newborn babies of smoking mothers are weaker and weighed 200 grams less in weight.



The view upon smoking within Islam:

"Tobacco is a foul thing." Dr. Yusuf Al Qaradawi in his book "The Lawful and Prohibited In Islam."



A general rule of the Islamic Shari'ah is that it is haram for the Muslim to eat or drink anything which may cause his death, either quickly or gradually, such as poisons or substances which are injurious to health or harmful to his body. It is also haram to eat or drink large quantities of a substance if large quantities of it cause illness. For the Muslim is not entirely his own master; he is also an asset to his religion and his community, and his life, health, wealth, and all that Allah has bestowed upon him are a trust with him which he is not permitted to diminish.

Allah says:

"And do not kill yourselves; indeed, Allah is ever Merciful to you." (4, 29)

He also says:

"And do not be cast into ruin by your own hands ..." (2, 195)

And His Messenger (peace be on him) said:

"Do not harm yourself or others."

As an application of this principle, we may say that if it is proved that the use of tobacco is injurious to health, it is prohibited, especially for a person whose physician has advised him to stop smoking. Even if it is not injurious to health, it is still a waste of money, spent neither for religious nor for secular benefit, and the Prophet (peace be on him) forbade wasting of wealth. This becomes the more serious when the money is otherwise needed for the sustenance of oneself or one's family.





Help your loved ones stop smoking

A fifth of the world's population is Muslim, and most Muslims live in areas where the prevalence of smoking is high and increasing by the day. According to statistics, it is estimated that out of the five million people who die due to smoking related causes every year, one million are Muslims. Yet, thanks to media influences and advertising, which erroneously portray smoking as part of a glamorous lifestyle, many Muslims, both men and women, are prompted to take to the habit themselves. In response to the growing trend, health and religious authorities

across the world have launched anti-smoking drives, to deter people and raise awareness of the harmful effects of smoking. Besides the mandatory health warning on cigarette packets, it has been proposed that the pack should carry graphic images of the diseases that can be contracted by smoking, to drive the point home to smokers.

In another official initiative, many cities and public places around the world have designated areas as «*non-smoking*», to make it difficult for people to smoke. Recently the holy cities of Makkah and Madeenah have been declared no-smoking zones, and smoking or even selling cigarettes has been made a punishable offence there.

Similarly, mosques and religious leaders across the world have taken it upon themselves to educate people about the harmful effects of smoking, which is considered a prohibited act in Islam. The Qur'an says (what means):

"...make not your own hands contribute to your destruction" (2, 195)

"...nor kill or destroy yourselves" (4, 29)





Every Ramadan, there are wide-ranging campaigns run in Muslim communities in the West and the Middle East, in order to highlight the problem of smoking and its consequences. Anti-smoking messages are the subject of many religious discourses and Friday sermons. Yet, according to the World Health Organization, which has been studying smoking trends and statistical patterns across the globe, the trend to take up smoking shows no signs of abating. Most smokers begin early in life, before they are 25 years old and the majority of smokers in affluent countries begin in their teens, with a decline in the age of starting smoking observed worldwide.

Where all these initiatives come from external sources, which may not have much of an immediate impact on a person, there is something much closer to home that is often overlooked



in the campaign against smoking and can have a positive influence on a smoker. A woman can do a lot in her capacity as a wife, mother, sister and daughter to discourage smoking in her loved ones, or help them quit the habit. For it is not just the pressure found from these anti-smoking campaigns, rather the pressure that children and loved ones can put upon a person are immense. Further, support and encouragement to stop smoking can be an integral part of the process, looking to change habitual patterns such as the post-meal smoke can be supported by the family as a whole. Children can be active participants by being monitors and reminders – surely they should serve as one of the primary reasons for giving up smoking in the first place, for after obedience to Allah, the fact that you have given up smoking means that you can not only play with your children, but you will enjoy their company longer in life, and Allah knows best.



Facts about Smoking

- Tobacco is a known or probable cause of some 25 different diseases.
- Medical care for smoking-related illnesses in the United States costs about \$50 billion annually.
- 4 million people die yearly from tobacco-related diseases, one death every 8 seconds.
- If current trends continue, WHO estimates that the toll will rise to 10 million by 2030.
- From 1950 to 2000, tobacco has killed more than 60 million people in developed countries alone, more than the victims of World War II.
- If current trends continue, tobacco will kill more than 100 million people in the first two decades of the 21st century.
- Generally, smokers die 10 to 12 years younger than non-smokers. Smokers between



the ages of 35 and 70 have death rates 3 times higher than non-smokers from the same age group.

- A smoker is 2 times more likely to develop cancer than a non-smoker; a heavy smoker is 4 times more likely.
- Overall, smoking accounts for at least 30% of all cancer deaths. Thus, smoking is the number one cancer killer.
- 82% of deaths from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease are due to cigarette smoking.
- A smoker is 10 times more likely to die from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease than a non-smoker.
- Risk of coronary heart disease is 70% higher among smokers.
- A smoker is 2 to 6 times more likely to experience sudden death from coronary heart disease than a non-smoker.
- A smoker is 2 times more likely to die from a heart attack than a non-smoker and the risk is higher among heavier smokers.
- A smoker who has had a heart attack and continues to smoke is 6 times more likely to have a second heart attack than one who stops smoking.

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